

MR. THOMAS: Good afternoon. My name is Marc Thomas. I live in Moab, Utah. I'm a volunteer with the Sierra Club. And I'm -- I am grateful to be here today. I appreciate the transparency you're showing in holding this public hearing. I'm going to abridge my comments so that more of these folks can get up to the mics more quickly. The four largest coal companies alone have \$2.7 billion in outstanding mine cleanup costs and no insurance in place to cover the costs. Three have filed for bankruptcy in the last year, likely walking away from billions in reclamation costs in Appalachia and the Powder River Basin, on top of the \$4 billion worth of mine cleanup the coal industry has already abandoned. In Moab, Utah, where I live, we are aware of what it can cost taxpayers when companies file for bankruptcy, leaving behind a toxic mess to clean up. When completed, perhaps not until 2029, the Moab, the Moab [indiscernible] project will cost the American public at least \$1 billion to remove tailings and ground-water contaminates threatening the Colorado River. Mining companies have an obligation to buy insurance to cover the cost of cleanups. But, Congress has allowed many coal producers to self-bond, meaning they promised to pay for cleanups themselves. But, self-bonding failures can hurt -- can hurt taxpayers and cleanup site residents for years, just like in Moab. As mining companies file for bankruptcy or spend their dwindling dollars elsewhere trying to stay afloat. One glaring example of self-bonding gone bad, a deal between Arch Coal and regulators in Wyoming means taxpayers will eventually get stuck with the bulk of the cleanup cost. The company has agreed to set aside, at most, only \$75 million to cover reclamation costs of more than \$450 million. Regardless of whether or not coal leasing resumes on public lands, the policy of self-bonding has failed. And all companies should be required to purchase insurance that covers their cleanup costs. Thank you.